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SERMON DCXXXIII.

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THIS WORLD NOT OUR PLACE OF REST.

"Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted.—MICAH ii. 10.

THE world we live in, is in some respects a beautiful world, and in some respects desirable as a place of residence ; and hence so many regard it as their portion—their home ; and never seek for a better habitation. But this our planet, though *measurably* fair, is nevertheless scarred, and though there are comforts here, there are crosses and trials here, and it is not the place designed by our Creator for the place of our rest. And when he sees us thinking that it is, acting as if it was, setting our hearts upon it, devoting ourselves to its pleasures, its honors, and its gains, as though there was nothing more valuable, as though he had not provided something more suitable and satisfying for the immortal spirit ; his voice to us in the stirring appeal of the text, is, "*Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted.*"

That this world was never intended by our Heavenly Father to be the place of our rest, is apparent from the following considerations.

1. Because *our stay here is so short and uncertain.*

The apostle asks, "What is your life?" and then, answering his own question, says: "It is a vapor, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." "The moment we begin to live we all begin to die." Three score years and ten, or fourscore years, and these tabernacles of ours, not formed of strong and

lasting materials, such as brass, iron, or stone, but formed of clay, and hence called "earthly houses," whose "foundation is in the dust," sink, fall, dissolve, and moulder away. A wind passes over them and they are gone, housed in the grave! And the time when they will thus go, is as uncertain as the span of their continuance here, is short. "Man knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them." Navigating the ocean of life, they know not the storm destined to wreck them upon its bosom, nor the nearness of that advancing wave which is to reach them and settle over them for ever. Pope Adrian was deprived of life by a knot; an illustrious Roman counsellor by a hair; Anacreon, the renowned Grecian poet, by the seed of a grape; the Emperor Charles VI. by a mushroom; and thousands more, have found in a flying atom, an insect, or a passing breeze, what has "changed their countenance and sent them away." "In the midst of life we are in death." And is such a world as this, where our stay is so brief and precarious, where all ages and classes are alike liable to the sudden and unsparing stroke of the great destroyer, where they are crushed before the moth—die from morning to evening, and from evening to morning, the banners of death waving in the sunlight and night air—is this the place of our rest? Did our Creator intend it as such? No; these decaying bodies, the urned ashes of our deceased relatives and friends, the buried dust of ages, our globe one vast burying ground, the sepulchre of life to its once busy, bustling millions, say, no! "*this is not your rest.*"

2. Again. This appears from the fact, that there are *so many vicissitudes, labors, disappointments, and sorrows here*. Not only "have we no continuing city" here, but even while we are here, we are subject to serious evils. Both the rational spirit, and the material frame in which it dwells, are called to suffer. "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks to fly upward." "Though a man live many years and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they are many. Numerous are the severe and humbling diseases to which flesh is liable, and many are preyed upon by these diseases—lying down on beds of languishing and pain. Numerous are the personal and domestic trials to which humanity is exposed, and many are daily encountering these trials. *Here*, one finds that he has misplaced his affections, and is suffering the pangs of a wounded heart; *there*, the bright hopes which one has been cherishing are overcast with clouds. *Here*, those who have commanded luxuries, who have been in their plenty, utter strangers to scenes of want and destitution, are by a sudden blow reduced to poverty and are wearing the wan look of want; and *there*, the King of Terrors has entered the sparkling circle, invaded the fireside and

table, snatched from thence a darling one, and survivors, bowed in sorrow, are mourning their loss. Thus, as the inevitable lot of our race on the earth, the law of their being here below, as a necessary part of the circumstances of their existence, there are trials, sore trials. And is such a place—a place of pains and tears, misfortunes, disappointments, and bereavements, designed by him who made us, to be the place of our rest? No; “this is not your rest.”

3. Again. *There is nothing here which is a sufficient portion for the soul.* The Father of spirits has given us a spirit which spurns the dust. Though imprisoned in walls of clay, it is not itself of clay, but is immaterial and immortal. Such being its nature, it requires for its adequate portion, a spiritual, durable something, congenial to its own nature. But that something is not found on this planet. Go to pleasure, go to wealth, go to fame, go to all which earth can minister or bestow, which is soothing, refreshing, and sustaining, and you cannot in any of them, or all of them, find what the soul of man needs, to fill and satisfy it. “The height says it is not in me, and the depth says it is not in me.” The soul hungers for food, which earth has not provided, and thirsts for drink which earth has not furnished. There flows not in all the vallies and channels of this world, a stream from whence man, by drawing, can quench the illimitable desires of the spirit within him. All things are too contracted, too sensual, too vain, too empty for his complete satisfaction. He cannot find in them rest. The soul—the breath of God—divine, from the skies—the soaring, towering spirit, can no more feed on ashes and be filled, than could the prodigal be filled “with the husks that the swine did eat.” They were not intended for its portion, and are not its portion. It cannot rest in them as such. It pants for something nobler, higher, more substantial, something above earth. “This is not your rest.”

4. Again. This world is not our rest, because of the prevalence here of sin, or in the language of the text, “because it is POLLUTED.” Polluted by sin. Sin has not only entered it, but scarred it, blasted it; poisoned its sources of happiness, tainted its air, corrupted its society. It is a world unfavorable to spirituality of mind, unfavorable to a devotional temper, unfavorable to growth in grace. It is a world which has forsaken God, and the wickedness which prevails in it—the pride, ambition, envy, jealousy, hatred, and revenge, which are here, are impressive melancholy commentaries on the fact. Not a holy being is to be found on the length and breadth of the globe; the best creature is but imperfectly sanctified, while the majority, the great majority are rebels against their creator; carry about in their hearts debasing passions, and have a supreme relish for the joys of sense and sin. Satan is here; it is peculiarly his province; here he spreads his nets; here he diffuses his pestilential influences, and all he can

do, and his host of emissaries can do (and their name is legion), is hostile to virtue, hostile to purity of mind, and the repose of the soul. A place so contaminated by sin, deeply, universally, fatally contaminated, a person cannot even *pass through* without danger—danger of being defiled by its abominations, and cheated by its tempting illusions—danger of being entangled by it in a perilous and criminal bondage. It is surely then no place of rest. "This world is *not* your rest, for it is *polluted*" and polluting.

5. We add that this world is not our rest, because we are told that, *unless renounced, it will occasion our destruction*. The words following the text are, "it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction." "Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted; *it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction*." And can that be our rest, our portion, the centre and stay of our hopes, our substantial, satisfying possession, our supreme good, which, if we venture to make such, will prove our ruin? Impossible! And yet such is the *world*. To be conformed to it in sentiment, feeling, and conduct, is to be estranged from the vital principles of the kingdom of Christ. To love it, is to love what is antagonistical to God, and truth, and holiness. To go with its current, is to go with the unbelieving, thoughtless throng, that are posting their way down to hell. To rest in it, is to abide in a doomed city, and be involved in the destruction which is hastening upon it.

We remark, that if there is weight in these considerations—if this world was never intended by our Creator as our rest, then,

1. *We should abandon the idea that rest is to be found in it.*

A divine of the last century, in one of his pastoral communications to his people, admonishes them not to look for that in the law, which can only be found in the gospel; not to look for that in themselves, which is only to be found in Christ; not to look for that in the creature, which is only to be found in the Creator; and not to look for that on earth, which is only to be found in heaven. Sound advice; and if we take it and act upon it, as we hope his people did, we shall not look for rest in the present world, where "all is vanity and vexation of spirit." And yet it is natural for man to do this. Finding himself in this world—the only world in which he has ever dwelt—the only world with which he has any practical acquaintance—a world which, though fallen and cursed, yet bears traces of the wisdom, goodness, and power of its Infinite Architect, and in which there are many things that promise felicity—it is natural for him to seek for a *portion* in it, and concentrate upon it his affections and desires. It is *natural* for him to do this; and yet he should *not* do it, because his nature is a depraved nature, warped from its first and true direction—because his mind is biased in favor of the sensual

and temporal—because this world, all it contains, is unlike his soul, material and perishing, and there is not among its wide range of objects, its possibilities of good, what can impart genuine and permanent happiness. “The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing,” and the earth-born passions of our nature—the passions of sensuality, avarice and ambition—are never satisfied by indulgence. Rest, then, *is not here*, and we should not *suppose* that it is here. The finding of it here should be laid entirely out of our account. We should no more presume to find a suitable portion for our immortal spirits amidst these shadows of time, this earth, smitten with barrenness, because of sin, this world of disappointments, losses and distresses, of sick beds and of graves—we should no more seek for rest in such a place as this, for that spirit which the inspiration of the Almighty gave, than we should seek for snow in the bosom of the sun! The world was not intended to be our rest—is not *fit* to be our rest—*cannot* be our rest—and the sooner we abandon all hope of *making* it our rest, the better. “Arise and depart, for this is not your rest.”

2. Again. If this world is not our rest, then *we should guard against whatever has a tendency to induce us to rest in it*. We have said that there was a strong propensity in our lapsed natures, not to admit, or, if we admit, not to remember, that earth furnishes no adequate good for the soul. We have said, too, that there were not a few objects here, which made many fair *promises* to this effect, held out enticing baits for us to seize, and which would draw us to trust in them and rest in them as the foundation of our happiness. But if they are *false*—as they are, for history says they are, and observation says they are, and experience says they are, and God says they are—if their pretensions are empty—if they “lead to bewilder, and dazzle to blind”—then we should shun them, and set a watch against them; since to believe them, to trust them, to take them to our hearts, is to embrace a phantom, and practice upon ourselves a delusion. Hence when business entices us, and pleasure entices us, and riches entice us, and offices and honors entice us, and gay associates entice us—to rest in them, claiming that they have what we want, and can give what we want, what our desires demand, what the strength of our mounting aspirations call for—we should say, *no*, vain comforters are ye all; my immortal part craves something different, something more substantial; I am an incarnate *spirit*—not corporeal alone, but spiritual also—and my illimitable mind, my ardent affections, my excursive imaginations, my thoughts that wander through eternity, embracing ages in their sweep—need a good, more immense than any creature, or all finite creatures can bestow. To that degree in which we are unwatchful, and allow ourselves to be entangled in the objects of sense and time—allow them to invite and fix upon

themselves our affections—to that degree are we *imposed* upon, and forget our true resting place.

3. Again. If the foregoing considerations have weight, *they teach us to interpret aright, afflictive dispensations of Providence.*

Their voice is but an echo of the words, "Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest." God knows how prone we are to lay up treasure here, and has, mercifully to us, made the things of earth insufficient and empty, that we may not take up with them, and seek nothing nobler and more satisfactory. Upon all objects and acquisitions here he has impressed vanity, that their very incapacity to satisfy, their failure to fill the heart, may cause them to be relinquished, and something more excellent have the soul's choice.

There is poetry and truth in those lines of that quaint poet Herbert. "When God," says he—

"When God at first made man,
Having a fount of blessings standing by,
Let us, said he, pour on him all we can;
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span.

"So strength first made a way;
Then beauty flowed; then wisdom, honor, pleasure;
When almost all was out, God made a stay;
Perceiving, that alone, of all his treasure,
Rest, in the bottom lay.

"For if I should, said he,
Bestow *this jewel also* on my creature,
He would adore my *gifts* instead of *me*;
And rest in *nature*, not the *God* of nature;
So both should losers be.

"Yet let him keep the *others*,
But keep them with repining *restlessness*;
Let him be rich and weary; that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet *weariness*
May toss him to my breast."

That just expresses it. "If *goodness* lead him not, yet *weariness* may toss him to my breast." God has stamped an incapacity on the things of earth, to satisfy the panting heart of man—has infused into them all an element of disquietude, that man, in his dissatisfaction with these things, his thirst for something more substantial, may come to the bosom of that God from which he has wandered. "When created comforts are embittered, or their sources dry up; when friends prove treacherous or cease to be; when pecuniary resources fly away or melt away; when earthly hopes are nipped in the bud, or blighted in the flower; God says to us, seek not repose under these decaying gourds of the world, but come under the tree of life—let me cover you with my

feathers, and trust under my wings." And this is *the secret of all afflictive dispensations of Providence*. They came not because Jehovah delights to send them—not because "he willingly afflicts and grieves the children of men," but they come, that men may disrelish the world, be tired of it, sit loose to it, and *arise and depart* from it. His voice to every mourner, to every disappointed smitten one, is, "Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest." Afflicted hearer, this is God's language to you. Have you been called to close the eyes of a deceased parent, a beloved father or mother? has a wife or husband dear to you as your own self, been taken away from your side? has a smiling babe been torn from your arms, and consigned to the narrow house? has the strong son or fond daughter whom you had relied upon as the prop and comfort of your age, been suddenly stricken down? have you any such tale of grief to tell, or any kindred tale of hopes blasted, plans frustrated, and purposes broken off;—God's voice to you in these afflictions was, "Arise and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted." He smote these comforts, to show you their vanity; he crushed these reeds on which you leaned, that you might substitute for them a rock; he broke these cisterns, that you might draw from the everlasting spring; he dashed down these fabrics of your hopes to teach, that "he builds too low, who builds beneath the skies." Yes, and a mercy it is for man that it is so, to recal his wandering affections to a forgotten God. He disturbs our rest here, that we may seek rest elsewhere; "makes earth appear to us like a desert, that our eyes may be raised with delight to the glories of heaven; as, on the barren plains of Arabia, the way-worn pilgrim looks above the desolate earth, and gazes, with solemn, silent rapture, on the lights of the firmament." Hence,

4. Again. If this world is not our rest, then we should "*set our affections on things above,*" and *find our rest in God*.

Though *rest* is not in the *creature*, it is in the *Creator*. Though we travel over the globe and inquire after rest in vain, weary ourselves for very vanity; to the interrogatory, Who will show us any good? a voice from the throne of Jehovah replies, "Acquaint thyself with *me*, and be at peace." If what the spirit needs is something spiritual, that something is in God, who is a pure spirit. If what the spirit needs is something vast and immense, commensurate with its own expanded and expanding powers, that something is in God, of whom alone infinity is predicable. If what the spirit needs is something enduring, something permanent, something that stretches beyond the grave and beyond time, that something is in the everlasting one, in whose perfections are opened fields of joy where the soul can expatiate to all eternity. He has been "the dwelling-place of his people in all generations," and will be through ceaseless ages, affording them a su-

preme good in the perpetual effluxes of his holiness and love. Our affections then, should be "set on things *above*, not on things on the earth." Failure *here* should lead us *there*; and vexed with the sins, burdened with the labors, harrassed by the temptations, and pained with the distresses of earth, we should go to God—the God of all consolation—and say, "whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth whom I desire besides thee." "My flesh, and my heart, and the world faileth, but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." Such should be our convictions, such our feelings, such our conduct. Such is the work of righteousness; and "the work of righteousness," says Isaiah, "shall be *peace*, and the effect of righteousness, *quietness* and assurance forever."

Finally. If the present is not our rest, was not *designed*, is not *fitted* to be our rest—then we *see the infatuation and guilt of those who are taking up with it as their portion.*

They are *infatuated*, for they are in the eager pursuit of what they will never obtain—searching for a substance among shadows; and they are *guilty*, for all the time they are engaged in this pursuit, God tells them that "the friendship of the world is enmity with him;" that the world is *polluted*, and destructive to those who fix upon it their hearts.

My dear hearers, ye thoughtless, giddy throng, who, wrapped in the delusions of sense and of time, are seeking a portion and rest for your souls here below, believe me when I say, that you will never find on this earth what you are sighing for and striving for. It is not here, and it is folly to look for it here. Travellers on the wide and desert wastes of Africa inform us of a curious spectral illusion there, the *mirage*, which spreads before them tempting views of fertility and beauty, which delude the eye and cheat the heart. Such a mirage is *rest* to the pilgrim in this world. Though he has it not now, it is seemingly before him, and he is pursuing after it. But it recedes as he approaches—is never reached—is never a reality. It is a naked assumption that it is *here*. It is *not* here. "Arise and depart, for this is not your rest."

But if the consideration that your pursuit is *vain*, will not deter you from it, then believe me further when I say, that the world, unless renounced, will *destroy your soul*. "It will destroy you, even with a *sore* destruction." The world—all it contains—is destined to be destroyed; for the earth and all things therein are to be burned up. But *his* destruction, who in defiance of reason, truth, and his Maker's commands, cleaves to it, is a sorer destruction than that with which materialism is visited, for *his* is the torture of *everlasting* fire, and the corroding of the never-dying worm.

SERMON DCXXXIV.

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YOUTH THE MOST HOPEFUL SEASON WITH COMMUNITIES.*

"When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst, but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not."—JOHN xxi. 18.

THIS was said to Peter; and if we may judge from his manhood, well does it tell the tale of his early life. Of few, can it be said, with more emphasis than of him, that a capricious and headstrong will controlled the activities of that period with which his written history begins. He was ardent, rash, self-reliant, and impulsive; the master of his own powers, the contriver of his own doings, the architect of his own destiny. But time brought on a period when all this was different. His motion was slow; his efforts were inefficient and weak; he was dependent on others, and more at their disposal than his own. The buoyant and elastic step was no more; he walked not whither he would; at the command of others, he stretched forth his hands; he was attired as they pleased; he was dragged to the tribunal of the persecutor, and the death of the cross.

This passage, which gives us, as it were, at one bold dash, so much of the character and history of the great apostle of the circumcision, presents at the same time an affecting view of the contrast between youth and age as seen in the ordinary experience of man. The one is endowed with an activity, a versatile energy, a self-confident and animating hope, that belongs not to the other. It looks upon the future as its own. It counts upon the opportunity and the power of molding its own destiny—of working out a character and filling up a history that shall accord with its own preferences. The other looks upon character and habits as already stereotyped, and upon destiny as determined—as almost completed.

I. Something like the youth, the manhood, and the decay, which make up the sum of human life, is seen in the history of nations and communities of men. They have, too, their period of birth; a time when they begin to be; a time that denies them a past, and makes the future everything to them; a time when instead of memories, they have hopes; instead of history, pro-

* Preached in a youthful village at the West.

phetic dreams and oracles; instead of achievements, high aims and strong resolve.

To this period there attaches something of the same importance that belongs to the youth of every individual. It is the forming period—the period on which the unwritten future depends—the period that determines whether the maturity that is to succeed shall be a desirable one, or only the ripening of mortal disease—the beginning of premature age and decay.

God has not failed to give the most significant testimony to its importance. The time was, when the race of man was young, and God gave them a paradise and bowers of the tree of life. And even when sin had begun and Eden was no more, he still bestowed the most earnest culture upon the undeveloped energies of a youthful world. What volumes of admonition were uttered in that approval which he gave of the piety of Abel. So in his punishment of its opposite in Cain; and still more, in walking with Enoch on earth and taking him bodily to heaven! Here were visible displays of deity and miraculous interposition, and a longevity which man has not since known. All that the most convincing testimony, both divine and human, the most impressive miracles, the intensest culture and a long life could do to form the race for a happy maturity, was done.

But, instead of this, there came on a maturity of vice, of iniquity, of rottenness, and premature decay. And what does God do now? He sees the earth filled with violence and crime. An old age of moral decrepitude and impotence has overtaken the race of man. There is nothing hopeful or promising, as in the days of its youth—nothing to invite the cultivation that was then bestowed. All progress, is progress downward, and every token of a brighter future is withheld. Noah is commissioned to utter warnings of an impending danger. The ark which he rears in their sight is a standing intimation of coming ruin. Every story which he adds, and every timber which is brought, are vocal—prophetic of the approaching doom. The clouds gather, the storm bursts forth, the floods roll on, and the effete, worn-out, decaying mass of corruption is buried in a watery grave.

Now, what makes the difference? It is not simply, that the earth is, in the latter case, filled with violence; for in proportion to the number of its inhabitants, there was violence enough in the earth when Cain imbrued his murderous hand in his brother's blood. The difference was, that in one case the race was young, and gave the promise which especially attaches to youth, that this early waywardness would be thrown off, and all that was vicious and wrong, corrected by the culture and experience that were to succeed. And in the other case, the season of youth was past, and a premature old age of corruption and moral disease had poisoned all the streams of life and cut off the last hope of recovery or reform. There was all the difference

which there is between an experiment begun and an experiment completed ; between some apparent promise of success, and the result of a total failure. How striking the language in which the Most High speaks out its feelings in view of the hopeless state into which a period of less than 2,000 years had plunged the diseased mass of mankind ! " I will destroy man that I have created, for it repenteth me that I have made them." " It repented the Lord," says the sacred historian, " that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

I might trace the same great lesson in that Second Youth with which the race of man was renewed in the family of Noah. But I prefer to draw my next illustration from the youthful history of the Hebrew Commonwealth. A few centuries sufficed to bring upon the post-diluvian world, a maturity of atheistic and idolatrous corruption, from which nothing was to be hoped ; and the great experiment of Providence was next renewed with a youthful fragment of the race—the single family of Abraham. And how carefully was that early bud of promise guarded and kept ! What more efficient or wonderful than the discipline by which Abraham was prepared to become the father of the faithful ! How paternal, and tender, and faith-inspiring the dealings of Jehovah with Isaac and Jacob and Joseph ! The germ of the future nation was withheld for three successive generations, from expanding itself and throwing upwards its branches toward heaven ; and this was that its radicles might have time to strike downward and reach the vital springs that never dry ; that the anticipated growth might in due time be fed with full supplies from the Source of Life.

And when that growth was visibly begun, the nation in its very infancy was brought to know its dependence upon God as its deliverer from famine and bondage. And when this was found insufficient to create a proper sense of that dependence, there was added the forty years' discipline under Moses ; the miracle of the cloudy and fiery pillar ; the manna from heaven ; the living water from the rock ; the passover ; the fiery serpents and the sacrifice of that entire generation of murmurers against God who were forbidden the land of promise, and whose carcasses fell in the wilderness. Such were the discipline and care that were bestowed by the Most High upon his chosen people in their youth. He most aptly compares it to the efforts of the parent bird, when the time has come for her young to forsake the nest. " As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings," so Jehovah " led his people about, instructed them, kept them as the apple of his eye." How different was all this, a few centuries later, when the hopeful season of their youth was past ! Instead of bearing with their waywardness and idolatry, how did he lift against them the threatened rod of war, and dash them in

pieces like a potter's vessel, and lay desolate their cities, and burn their temple, and send the remnant of their tribes into captivity! Mere discipline was now of no avail. The tree had become too strong by the growth of centuries for any culture to mold or to sway: and it only remained for it to be torn up by its roots and cast out into another land; and there, in process of time, a youthful scion was derived from its most vital portion and planted again in the vineyard of the Lord. Thus the youth of his people was renewed and enough of purity retained to admit of the timely ushering of the Messiah upon the stage.

II. Such is the testimony of God's early providence to the superior promise of the youthful period, in bodies or communities of men, as compared with those that are more advanced. I might bring out and illustrate several distinct elements of this superior promise, and thus show that it is in accordance with sound philosophy and general laws, that God has treated the youthful period in the history of nations and communities, as the more hopeful one. I shall confine myself to two.

1. That which presents itself first and attracts the notice of the most superficial observer, is the element of youthful enterprise. Notwithstanding the obscurity that hangs about the origin of the early nations, we can affirm, as a general truth, that with them, the period of enterprise was the period of youth. Nimrod and Semiramis reigned over a youthful people; and those were the days of enterprise in the valley of the Tigris. There was the enterprise of youthful communities in the project of Babel. Egypt, in the vigor of her youth, excavated the catacombs, built the hundred-gated Thebes, wrought colossal sculptures, hewed out monoliths, reared the towering pyramids. But when her enterprise had expended itself, she became an easy prey to the conqueror. And for nearly thirty centuries her imbecile sons have walked amid the monuments of her youthful greatness, as the traveller wends his way amid Alpine summits, with no thought that those snow-capped peaks have any lessons of human enterprise for the beholder.

Rome had a youth of republicanism and a youth of despotism; and in both she was enterprising and strong. She trode down the nations, almost at will, with her iron foot, or held them in hopeless vassalage with her giant arm. But as she became old and corrupt, her enterprise was gone. She ceased to reach abroad. She needed more than all her strength at home. She sunk down and fell asunder from pure senility and internal disease.

I might draw the same great lesson from the empire of the Saracens, and from various passages in the history of modern Europe. Where there are apparent exceptions, as in the case of the English nation, it would be easy to show that the vigor of

youth has been renewed by an infusion of vitality and strength from their young and flourishing colonies. But for these, English enterprise had long ago exhausted itself, and an old age of weakness come on.

I shall regard the point as established then, without further argument, that in nations and communities of men, the period of enterprise is the period of early life.

2. I propose to show, secondly, that another element of importance and promise pertaining to this youthful period, is a strong, inherent, vital energy that operates to throw off the disease of malignant vices, and resist the tendency to internal decay. This is well illustrated by the early annals of Rome. If her own historians have done her justice, no nation ever took its rise from more unpromising material or a lower stage of character. Its foundation upon the banks of the Tiber was laid by a band of barbarians and criminals, and Romulus himself, their leader, was the murderer of his own brother.

And yet such was the pressure of the necessity that was laid upon them, and such was the vitality of that youthful period of their community, that in less than two generations, they acquire a character of more than ordinary rectitude and purity. And there is an emphasis in the phrase, *Roman virtue*, as retained in our own times. Much the same is now said to communities of transported criminals in the vicinity of Botany Bay.

But this department of the subject admits of an illustration from the history of religious communities. The seven churches of Asia were purest and most hopeful in their youth. The church of Ephesus had already fallen from their first love when the apocalyptic message was sent them. And they were assured that their only hopeful period of recovery was an early one. "Quickly,"—such was the language of the spirit. Quickly their candlestick was to be removed, unless they stirred up their youthful energies to the work of repentance and the performance of their first works. Very similar were the warnings that were addressed to the churches of Pergamos and Laodicea. Their only hope was in waking up the vital power that remained, and throwing off the disease that was upon them while they were young. This, all but one of the seven churches, failed to do, and the work of decay with them was rapid and sure. The church of Rome, in the days of its youth, was so exemplary and pure, that Paul told them their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world." A maturity of a few centuries, however, rendered it so corrupt that every effort to reform it has proved abortive, and its vices and heresies have become the scourge of the whole world.

The church of the Nestorians when young was pure and evangelic, and enterprising. Her missionaries spread the gospel and its triumphs from Damascus to Peking, from Ceylon to Siberia.

Her cumbrous organization and machinery were like Saul's armor upon the stripling son of Jesse. But the energy, and zeal, and fire of youth rose superior to every obstacle, and spread the knowledge of the Savior over the continent of Asia. But in her crippled and weary old age, she has not been able to hold fast that which was her own. The emissaries of Rome have stolen away a large share of her strength, and but for the timely aid that has been rendered her by the American churches, there would be reason to fear that the papacy would soon engulf the whole. In her youth, with only the dim light that had come down through eight centuries, with the burden of an unscriptural hierarchy upon her, and without the printed bible to aid and confirm her conquests, she aspired to the conversion of the vast empires of Persia, Tartary, India and China. In the old age which she has now reached, with the printed bible in hand, and learned missionaries to aid her, she is scarcely able to reclaim and save her own wandering sons.

I trust that the point has now been rendered sufficiently clear, that with communities and bodies of men, as well as individuals, the season of promise—the time to lay a desirable foundation for the future—is the period of youth. The providence of God clearly indicates this, and the obvious predominance of enterprise and healthful vital energy in the youthful period, discovers to us the most ample reason why it should be so.

III. The subject as now developed has a three-fold application to us. It addresses us, as citizens of this youthful republic,—as patrons of the youthful religious enterprises of our land,—and as members of this local community.

1. God has given us in this land a goodly heritage, and a youthful one. For thousands of years, he kept back the knowledge of this continent with its large resources, and its wide domain from the civilized nations of the old world, that when its colonization should begin, it might be under the best auspices, and with the largest promise of good for the race of man. And when the time had come for lifting the veil,—the mariner's compass having been discovered, and the art of printing having come into use, and the reformation just ready to flash its broad sheen of light over Europe, still this rocky cradle of liberty was not given to the Spaniards, nor to the French, but reserved another hundred years, until the Puritans could be disciplined amid the storms and fires of persecution, and prepared to begin an empire of freedom for the world. The work assigned them, was not to take an old decrepit nation, and hew away its rottenness, and infuse into it the spirit of life and youth anew—but to begin with the infant, and make it strong, and active, and pure, amid the invigorating influence of New England storms and snows, and under the simple Christianity of the New Testament.

And now that infant has become a strong and enterprising youth, and is stretching out her arms over the continent, and over all the seas, and amazing the world with feats of activity and vigor and strength. And there is hope in our country's youth. She has grievous vices, dark spots—sore and malignant disease upon her, it is true—but there is the healthful vitality of youth to combat and throw off disease, there are large fields for emigration still remaining to renew in years to come, the hardy virtues of the pioneer, and there are our nation's own warm aspirings and fond hopes, and buoyant attitude in the view of the world, with their inherent potency to resist decay. But other nations too have been young, and enjoyed many of these advantages in their youth, and yet have grown prematurely old, in spite of them, and perished. And there is an echo from their decaying monuments; there are a thousand voices from the wrecks of the past; there are the touching memories of our fathers, and our youthful country's call, and the speaking destinies of a legible future—all thundering forth the admonition. Now is the time—for the sons of this youthful republic to be jealous of her virtue and summon every guardian influence to make and keep her pure. Let them labor now, to promote a high intelligence, a pure morality, and above all, a quickening, diffusive religion, a prevalent, actuating fear of God among the masses; let them do all they can to enthrone the Lord Jesus Christ, and the religion of the New Testament in their own hearts, in our new settlements, over our emigrant population, and in the high places of trust and power; let them bring the mightiest influences of the unseen world to bear in the ordering of the concerns of this, and to shut out the low vices and dark crimes that blacken our horizon, and then our country's youth shall be pure, and her maturity strong, and glorious, and enduring. But let the season of her youth be lost or perverted, and the early inroads of incurable disease shall give premonition of her doom, and write in the face of all her lofty pretensions, for the world to read,—“that she, too, was born to die.”

2. But we have, too, our youthful enterprises in behalf of religion. We have organizations for benevolent action that contemplate the spiritual improvement of our own population and of the world. And these are in their youth, and are [acting] with the energy and zeal that belong to youth. And it is of unspeakable importance that the supplies from which their life is fed, be rendered constant and full, and their youthful vigor, and activity, and purity, kept up, and on the advance for generations to come. Especially is this true of the churches of our land. The great majority of them are young, and every year is ushering a new multitude of them into being. These are the vital organs of the great national body, that renew the currents of health in its circulation, and put back the progress of disease and decay. How

important that these should ever be young in the ardor of their first love to the Redeemer—watching with sleepless vigilance, lest the warm pulsations of that early love should wax tardy, and its impulsive energy decline! How can the nation be young, and yet its heart and lungs—the vital air-cells and purifiers of its very blood—become rigid and cold with premature old age, or even ossified and dead?

This church, reckoning from the time of its birth is young. And the ardor and fire of youth, I trust, are still kept alive. And there can be no good reason why it should ever be otherwise. The body passes on, by an unavoidable necessity, from youth to age. But not so the spiritual affections of those who have been "born again." Their youth may be perpetually "renewed like the eagle's." It is written for them, for you, my brethren, "they that wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength, they shall mount up on wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." We may advance in years, but the church shall still be young; time may lay its furrows in our countenances, but the daughter of Zion shall still be fair; disease may lay these bodies in the dust, but the church of Christ still lives on in her sons; aye, lives on in the departed; and is renewed in them with the vigor of an immortal youth. Their life is not extinguished. It is out of our sight—it has ceased to be discernible by sense, but that is because it is "hidden with Christ in God." It is purer, more remote from decay than it could ever be on earth.

Let this church, then, aim to keep up the life of faith, and the buoyant zeal of youth. Let her youthful members renew the life of holy affections from day to day. Let her strong pillars in middle life be as "lively stones, built up into the spiritual house."

Let those who are drawing nearest to the line where the visible fades out into the invisible—but oh! for whom shall such an admonition be framed? How little do we know of the proximity of mortals to that momentous change! We only know that some in the church are near; that the golden link of connection between the church below and the church above is to be kept bright, and the vision of faith quickened to behold it, by the frequent transition of the members of the one to the shining ranks of the others. But for whom it is appointed first to go—who are living nearest to the verge of that blessed world—whether it be the oldest, the youngest, the feeblest, or the strongest, we wait for time to tell. All are near enough, and oh! may all daily strive to catch the spirit of that world, and so be prepared when they reach its margin, to sing,

"By death I shall escape from death,
And youth immortal gain."

3. But I must pass to the application that our subject demands,

to this youthful community. Within the memory of some who are before me this place has had its beginning. You can tell of the time when the material of these dwellings, these stores, these factories, and these churches, was in the forest or in the quarry. The tall trees were waving their tops over your now graded streets—yonder lake was plowed by no keel but that of the Indian's light canoe—your river was wasting its strength in its time-worn channel, and nothing foretold the busy industry to which the long silence of Nature has now given place. But now the hillocks have been leveled down, and the vallies filled, and gardens smile where it seemed an irreclaimable wild; houses, sacred to neatness and order, the scene of cheerful firesides and happy homes, present their modest and graceful proportions along your streets; factories, whose productive industry reaches far abroad, lift their towering stories, and wake the echoes of the valley with their bells and clattering cams; your roads are already adapted to an active commerce; railroads are near you and soon to be of you—you live, even now, almost within hearing of the scream of the whistle; the telegraph reports to you its messages with the same dispatch as in our largest cities; the press throws off its weekly issues among you; the conveniences and the luxuries of an active mercantile traffic are brought to your very door; your river that for thousands of years had flowed idly by, has been taught to work, and like a mighty giant with a hundred hands, has sawed up your forests and is still turning the ponderous wheels that are doing the work of a thousand men. Under the very eye of its early settlers, and while that eye is still taking note, this village has passed from infancy to a vigorous youth, and is spreading its influence far abroad.

It is no longer a question whether this is to be a point of attraction for the enterprising and industrious; whether masses of men are to live and die here; whether their intimate contact shall be mutually improving or corrupting; or whether an influence shall be exerted upon the region around, that shall be potent to bless or to blight. All this is settled. There is to be a compact population here, and there will be the temptations and exposures, and corrupting influences which are always incident to a condensed state of society. There will be, also, peculiar advantages for combating these evils, and attaining a highly improved social state. But the thing which we are chiefly interested to notice now, is that this village is young. Its character is yet in the hands of its inhabitants. The influences that are to be most potent here remain to be determined. And very much will depend upon what is done, while the place is in its youth: upon what is done by the first generation of settlers.

You have made a noble beginning. You have already your temples of worship, and your temples of science. Here is proof that you have not lost sight of the importance of religious

influences, nor forgotten that "uneducated mind is educated vice."

But this is only beginning. Shall principles upon which you have thus nobly started, be as nobly carried out? Shall the influences which you have invoked at the beginning receive your hearty support to the end? Shall everything that opposes them incur your indignant frown? Shall yonder stately edifice, sacred to education and virtue and truth, the ornament of your village, and the proof of forecast and wisdom somewhere, stand to rebuke and forbid the remotest patronage of the school of vice? Shall it be as if this entire hill-side, and some mighty pageant on its top, bore in flaming characters,—No corrupter of youth shall be tolerated here? No license shall be given to any set of men to undo what we, at so great expense of treasure and effort, are laboring to accomplish? Shall the sabbath-bell, and these spires pointing toward heaven, utter a language that is ever to find its deepest echo in the hearts of this people? Shall it be as if a concert of a thousand voices were continually proclaiming, "We will have a weekly sabbath religiously observed: a day of holy rest, and not a day of bacchanalian riot; we will have the Sunday School, and not the school of vice; we will invoke the spirit of God, and not the spirit of all evil; we will drink from the well-spring of truth, and not from the intoxicating bowl; we will maintain the temple of Jehovah, and not the temple of Bacchus; we will give our precious leisure to the improvement of ourselves or others, and not to the society of idlers, or to scenes of dissipation or revelry. We will train the generation to come to intelligence, to industry, to temperance, to reverence for God and the Bible, and the ordinances of religion. We will do all we can to the last, to render truth and virtue the guardian influences of this place, and to protract their guardianship to the remotest generation. All this you may declare now, and give it an emphasis that shall cause it to be believed.

The place is young, and in the language of the text may "gird itself and go whither it will." It may move along the ascending pathway of intelligence and exalted virtue. It may mount to an eminence on which it shall challenge the admiration of all who hear its name. Or it may take the descending grade, and decline downward to infamy. A good name is worth all that it will cost you. And it will cost ceaseless effort and untiring vigilance. You must not be content with the beginning, and cheerfully endure the fatigue of the upward course. An ascent is never accomplished without the cost of toil. A downward career, on the other hand, will cost nothing but remissness and neglect. You need not lend yourselves to the adversary of all good, to do his work. He will find enough that will be ready to do it, if you interpose no resistance. You have but to sleep at your post, and before you dream of it, the good name of your village may be

sacrificed. Your own sons may dig the grave of its reputation, and the miserable epitaph shall be "this people began to build, and were not able to finish."

But we look not for this. I hold up the dark side of the picture, that you may abhor and beware. Your beginning is auspicious, and you have not begun too late. The freshness of early youth is yet upon this settlement, and with it, there is doubtless something of the unsophisticated docility of youth. Let it grow and mature. I know you will watch its growth, and control the upward shooting of the youthful trunk; you will nourish it, and rejoice to see it spread, and lift its top toward Heaven; you will remove its excrescences and study to give it symmetry and strength; you will suffer no Vandal or outlaw to hack or girdle it; you will turn aside the adverse blasts that might bend it too low, and you will prop it round about with the supports of Education, and Virtue, and Religion.

This community is now in its most plastic state; in this state it is put into your hands to mold and form for a bright and enviable future. It will be less plastic bye-and-bye. The material will have taken form, and grown *hard*. Now you may make your impressions as upon the soft wax, or the clay. In years to come, it will have changed to granite or adamant. If you form it right now, it will be hard for the devil or his emissaries to undo your work, then. If the tree sends down its roots deep now, and throws up its branches with a symmetrical growth, and forms for itself a strong and stately trunk, it will be too late to bend or distort it.

Your community is young—your church is young—the nation is young—and you have young hands, and young hearts; and you have but to improve these advantages with a zeal and a wisdom that shall be worthy of them, and there shall be no brighter spot, no more intelligent or virtuous community, no more prosperous people, no more flourishing church than this. It shall be a happy place in which to live, and a favored place in which to die. Religion shall throw her most hallowed influences around it; the voice of prayer shall greet the rising sun and the rising stars; the word of God shall be studied and revered, and loved; the Spirit of God shall dwell in the hearts of His people, and come down upon the entire community like rain upon the mown grass, and, commingled with songs of praise that shall float in the morning air, shall be heard with a blessed frequency, the new song of the soul that has just escaped from the horrible pit of sin to the solid Rock of Hope.

Thus it will be if the friends of virtue, and good order, and religion, are true to the obligations that rest upon them. But let the restraints of virtue be relaxed, and her guardianship thrown off, and the religious education of children neglected, and it is most certain, (not more certain in regard to this place than every

other place where similar exposures exist), yet most certain it is that this village would become the bond-slave of mammon, a forum of the dissipated, a stronghold of rowdiness, and a plague spot and source of corruption to the entire region around; a place where the lovers of strong drink shall drain the intoxicating glass; a place where the voice of profane scoffing and blasphemy shall drown every other voice; where infidelity shall hold up the most sacred things of religion to low mockery and contempt; where gamblers and theatrical performers, and the importers of other debasing amusements, shall draw in and corrupt the young, and the great enemy of souls prepare an easy harvest for the second death.

Upon you it rests, in a great measure, beloved hearers, to say to which of these destinies this place shall be given. While you toil for the better destiny, the youthfulness of the place is in your favor, the Sabbath and the truth will work with you and for you, the sympathies and prayers of all the good are with you, and above all, the Lord Jehovah himself, will be with you while you be with him. And the promise, from his own lips to you, is, "they that seek me early, shall find me."

SERMON DCXXXV.

BY REV. SAMUEL SAWYER.

ROGERSVILLE, TENN.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER'S JOY.

"For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy."—1 THESS. ii. 19, 20.

This is the language of the great Apostle of the Gentiles to a band of disciples he had gathered into the church. The salvation of men was his great object. Around it were centred all his affections, and to it he gave all his energies. The encouragement of his heart was the prospect of bringing a multitude in the final day saved by his instrumentality. For this he was willing to toil; for this he cheerfully consecrated his life; for this he endured persecution, and even martyrdom. When christian converts walked worthy of their vocation, they were his "hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing."

Let us inquire WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THINGS WHICH ENCOURAGE A MINISTER'S HEART; or, *when christians are his hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?*

I. A minister's heart is encouraged *when christians manifest that their great and absorbing aim in life is to walk in the fear and love of God.* When christians manifest a steady and uniform piety; when the prevailing disposition is to glorify God; when they all fear to offend, and take pleasure in obeying the precepts of Christ; then the minister's heart is encouraged, and he can go forward cheerfully in his work. He can point to the people of God, and say, "Behold the transforming power of the religion of the cross in the lives of these christians. They are becoming more and more holy; more and more like God in singleness of purpose and excellence of character. They walk by faith, and not by sight. Their conversation is in heaven. *Once* bold transgressors, they lived as though the soul had its everlasting repose in the grave—as though there was no eternity and no world of retribution; *now* they are obedient disciples pressing toward the mark for the prize of their high calling, and looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith." When the minister can thus speak of his people, then, like one of old, he can exultingly exclaim, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." For then the Gospel does what it proposes. It fills a darkened soul with light. It changes enmity to love. It displaces sin and imparts holiness. It takes away all grovelling and debasing aims, and substitutes for them the will of God as the grand and governing purpose of life. It makes man like God and earth like heaven. And when christians exhibit the fear and love of Jehovah, then they are the hope and joy and crown of rejoicing to the faithful minister.

II. A minister's heart is encouraged *when christians abound in the spirit of prayer, SECRET, FAMILY, and SOCIAL.* When they thus continue in fervent and effectual supplication, he feels that he is not laboring alone; that others sympathise with him, and would hold up his hands and gladden his heart, by united efforts to promote the interests of Zion, and he girds up the loins of his mind and brightens his armor, and with Immanuel's banner of love waving over him, he leads forward the sacramental host through the varied scenes of tribulation and conflict, by the green pastures and along the still waters of salvation to the Canaan of eternal rest and reward.

III. A minister's heart is encouraged *when his people attend the sanctuary, and sustain the Gospel, and defend his reputation.*

The church of Scotland, for three hundred years, has been the hope and joy, and crown of rejoicing to its ministry, and no church on earth puts a higher estimate on the preached Word, or sustains the Gospel with more efficiency. Men, women, and children, especially the consecrated children of believing parents, throng the temple gates, and as in the time of Christ, the lame, and the halt, and the blind, and the paralytic, and those of long

infirmities and diseases, were brought by their friends to him, so the aged, and the infirm, and afflicted, are brought by their friends to the house of God, to be enlightened by the truth and cheered by the promises, and animated by the hopes of a preached Gospel. They thirst for saving knowledge, and desire to be taught the way of life still more perfectly. This reverence for the sanctuary gives dignity and honor to the heralds of the cross, and clothes their message with solemn and superhuman power.

It sometimes happens that a minister of Christ is assailed by sectarian zeal, or by those reproved by his faithful admonitions, or by some fluttering and twittering members of his own church, who hastily condemn that very conduct in respect to which he has most earnestly prayed for the wisdom that cometh from above to direct him; and then his spirit is heavy, and he goes and tells his Savior of the weight upon his heart. He opens the Bible for comfort, and there he reads: "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." In these things which are incident to the minister's position, and which come to humble him, and to try his faith, and call out his virtues, how grateful to his heart to find his people ready to hold up his hands, and encourage him in his work of saving the lost, and of building them up in faith. When he gives his toils and prayers, and tears to a people, and their trials are his, and their afflictions and reproaches his, it is one of the most pleasant things in his experience, and one which most deeply affects him, that they show their gratitude and love in return. Then they are his glory, and joy, and crown of rejoicing. With this he can labor on unceasingly in his commission.

IV. A minister is encouraged *when christians have a proper denominational spirit to go forward as one man to do whatever will promote their own prosperity and the glory of God.* A minister may be satisfied in his own mind as to what course will best advance the interests of his church, but unless his people co-operate with him in his plans and efforts, *his* efforts will be to little purpose. They may pursue a course which will hinder a healthy denominational development. But when christians feel that the denomination to which they belong is not guilty of schism in occupying a distinct and separate existence, but is called of God to fortify itself, and lengthen its cords, and strengthen its stakes, and increase its influence; and when it is willing to co-operate with the minister in all proper methods of church extension, then is he encouraged by their course.

V. A church is the glory and joy of a minister *when its members walk in love towards each other, and towards them that are without.* "How pleasant," exclaimed the Psalmist, "it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." When they are united in faith and have one great object, namely, the glory of God by the

enlargement and piety of the church, harmony will prevail. It is most gratifying to the heart of the minister, when christians are thus united and ready to co-operate in every good work. It gives him unaffected joy when brotherly love abounds, when christian charity prevails among the members of his flock. Then his exhortations to follow Christ are not in vain. They will have power, and the spirit which kindly looked upon Peter notwithstanding his denial, and melted him to tears, and which prayed, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do," will become more and more predominant, until showers of divine grace will be poured out to refresh the vineyard of the Lord.

VI. A church is the hope and joy of the minister *when their light shines with converting power*. Christians are called the light of the world and the salt of the earth. They are exhorted to let their light so shine before men, that others seeing their good works, may be led to glorify our Father which is in heaven. When they feel their responsibilities, and try to meet them; when they hunger and thirst for the word of life, and so profit by it as to bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness in their daily walk and conversation, then the Gospel message falls with new power on the church and the world. When the father and mother so live before their children as to convince them that they prize their coming to Christ more than their introduction into the circles of wealth or fashion or fame, and that the dearest object of their heart is to witness their growing attachment to the things which make for their everlasting peace, and so commend the beauty and excellence of the religion of Jesus to them, by exhibiting its purity and glory in their every day life, as to gather them early into the fold of the Redeemer; when the wife is so exemplary in her deportment towards her husband as to convince him of her sincerity, and of the value of the christian's hope, and to lead him to wish for her enjoyment in reading the Bible, and in prayer, and every religious duty, and at length to seek and find an interest in atoning blood, and join his efforts with hers to train the children committed to their care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; when the friend speaks to his friend of the love of God, and the joy of pardon, and the bright prospect of heaven—that world where sin is unknown and death never comes, and friends meet to part no more—and of the society of angels until his eyes moisten, and his heart relents, and his lips breathe forth the prayers of the contrite, and the dead is made alive, and the lost found; when religion thus commends itself in the conduct and life of its professors, then is the minister's heart filled with joy, for he sees his labor is not in vain in the Lord.

VII. A minister is encouraged *when many are converted under his ministry*. When a distinguished servant of Christ, in Virginia, after thirty years of unwearied toil and self-denial, and consistent christian walk, was blessed with a revival of reli-

gion which embraced a good part of his own household, his soul was so filled with joy, that he remarked to some of his brethren, that he was amply repaid, and could labor thirty years more if it should please the Master for another such revival." If there is joy over one sinner that repenteth in the presence of the angels, why should not the minister rejoice when he sees many converted under his labors? He may and does rejoice in the goodness of God which permits him to reap so glorious a harvest. His heart swells with holy joy and gratitude. There is no vanity or pride in his bosom, but humility. He thanks God that the weary and heavy laden, as they come to Christ, find rest. He is made humbler and better and more faithful, or should be, under such a blessing. His heart is full. He stands by the cross, and gets near to the throne. He weeps with them that weep, and rejoices with them that rejoice.

Lastly. Christians will be the hope and joy, and crown of rejoicing to the minister, *when he shall stand with them in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming*, to receive his welcome and reward. Whatever comfort and happiness a christian people can give a minister in this world, the cup of his joy will be full only when he stands with them on the shores of immortality, their trials and sorrows all over, and their redemption complete. To be able to say, "Here, Lord, I am, a sinner saved by grace myself, yet honored in saving others. Here are fathers and mothers, and sons and daughters, and brothers and sisters, and some whole families, saved under my ministry by the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. Blessed Savior, thou didst lay down thy life for me, I have given all but life for these. These are the seals of my ministry which thou hast given; all praise to thee." This will be a happy day to the faithful servant of Christ. Shall it be to us? Shall we be there, as sinners saved by grace? Will you, then, be our glory and joy? You, for whom our years are passing away, our supplications continue to go up, our tears of affection or solicitude fall; you, for whom we study the sacred Word, and preach its tender or alarming truths; first in our waking thoughts and last; will you, then, be our crown of rejoicing? O, christian friends, think often of this approaching day, and live nearer the throne of grace; be more entirely consecrated to God, that all of you may then stand accepted in the Beloved, and be the hope and joy, and crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, of all these servants of his who have ministered to you in holy things.

But here are some unreconciled to God. What shall be our relations to them in that searching day! Will you be our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing, our glory? Can you be, if you resist the Gospel, instead of yielding to its power? O that you would give yourselves up to God as others have done, that in the morning of the resurrection you, too, and all of us might be found to the praise of his glorious grace.